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UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000024

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL PHUM UNSC BM
SUBJECT: CHINA AND RUSSIA VETO UNSC BURMA RESOLUTION

REF: USUN 17

¶1. On January 12, the Security Council voted 9 - 3 (China,
Russia, South Africa) - 3 (Indonesia, Qatar, Congo) on the
UNSCR introduced by the United States and co-sponsored by the
United Kingdom on the situation in Burma. The negative votes
by permanent members China and Russia resulted in defeat.

¶2. China, South Africa, Indonesia, Qatar, and Russia
delivered Explanations of Vote prior to the vote. After the
vote, the United States, UK, Italy, Congo, Ghana, Belgium,
Slovakia, France, and Panama delivered Explanations of Vote.
The permanent representative of Myanmar was the last speaker.

¶3. All Council members expressed concern about the situation
in Burma, and all expressed support for the
Secretary-General's "Good Offices" mission. Recalling views

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presented during negotiations, the opponents and those who
abstained emphasized the view that the Security Council is an
inappropriate venue for this topic as the situation in Burma
does not meet the UN Charter definition of threats to
international peace and security.

¶4. Noteworthy statements included the following: (full
session can be viewed at www.un.org/webcast; statement by
USUN Ambasssador Wolff is available at www.un.int/usa):

China (no): China's position is a matter of principle;
action in the Council on this matter is the last option China
wants to see.... We encourage the Secretary-General to
appoint a Special Representative on Myanmar as soon as
possible.

South Africa (no): Our vote should not be read as a
question, judgment or comment on the content of the
resolution, but reflects our most fundamental view that the
situation in Myanmar does not meet the Charter's mandate.
This issue is best left to the Human Rights Council, and we
fear it may compromise the Good Offices mission.

Indonesia (abstain): This resolution addresses vitally
important issues, but it is not a proper subject for the
Council in comparison to situations elsewhere involving the
direct use of armed force against civilians, matters which
should have a higher priority in the Council. As a member of
ASEAN, as a neighboring country and as a member on this
Council, Myanmar must now recognize that the issue is no
longer just a bilateral nor regional issue but an
international one.

Qatar (abstain): Our position reflects our respect for the
UN Charter and opposition to interference in the internal
affairs of a country, but we understand this resolution aims
to take a preventive measure.

Russia (no): Russia's position has been clear. We oppose placing Myanmar on the Council's agenda because the situation does not represent a threat to international peace and security.

UK (yes): The Council doesn't have an exclusive right to any one issue; the entire UN community should work in a complementary fashion.

Italy (yes): We profoundly share the concerns about the situation in Burma, but we are also believe punitive approaches are ineffective and prefer a consensual attitude in the Council.

Congo (abstain): Other UN bodies are more competent to deal with this matter.

Ghana (yes): Contemporary definitions of security must be broader.

Panama (yes): I regret the pressure that has been applied in bringing this issue for a decision today. Regret that we could not reach consensus; consider outcome a failure.

Burma: Security Council should be proud of itself. Gratified that two permanent members acted to uphold the UN Charter. We have close and cordial relations with all five of our neighbors. Resolution would not have helped the Good Offices mission. We responded to Gambari request by releasing five student dissidents.
WOLFF